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SUBJECT: SHUFFLES IN PRESIDENT BANDA'S CABINET

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¶1. (U) President Banda accepted Defense Minister George Mpombo's resignation on June 7 and announced Mpombo's successor on June 9 -- Minister of Home Affairs Kalombo Mwansa was appointed as Minister of Defense and Lameck Mangani, the Lusaka Provincial Minister, became the Minister of Home Affairs. Mangani's previous position remains vacant, as no successor was named.

¶2. (SBU) Kalombo Mwansa obtained a law degree from Harvard University and a Master's degree in Criminology from Cambridge University (UK). He began his career in academia, working his way up to Acting Dean of the University of Zambia's law school in 1993. He began his public service career as Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs from 1993 to 1998, before being appointed as Deputy Secretary to the Cabinet. He served as Foreign Minister from 2002-2005 and then was appointed Minister of Home Affairs for an eight-month period in 2005. Mwansa was appointed as Minister of Mines and Mineral Development in late 2005, before becoming Minister of Home Affairs in late 2008. Mwansa is from the Luapula Province, bordering DRC.

¶3. (SBU) Lameck Mangani is a member of Parliament for Chipata Central Constituency in the Eastern Province -- President Banda's home province. Before serving as Lusaka minister, Mangani served as Provincial Minister of Eastern Province.

¶4. (SBU) Embassy staff have previously worked with Mwansa in his capacity as Minister of Home Affairs, where he pushed an agenda of capacity building for the police and expressed openness to cooperation with the USG. We are hopeful his appointment to the MOD will usher in a new era of mil-mil cooperation, which has suffered recently from an apparent lack of enthusiasm by the GRZ. Mwansa does not have an apparent political base within the ruling Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD), but is considered to be a competent technocrat. Mission staff have not had much experience with the new Minister of Home Affairs, who is coming into his first national political posting, but contacts indicate he has the ear and confidence of President Banda.

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